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This also is a question in which moral criminality and war causality are interwoven. Austria-Hungary made war on Serbia in order to ensure its own survival, and Germany covered its ally for the same reason. Both were acting under force of self-preservation. But when Russia fomented a world war out of the Serbian war, its motive was its assumed mission of protecting the Slavs and appropriating the Straits, wherein Russia was acting not for its self-preservation but for its expansion. The international anarchy in which we have hitherto lived and apparently must go on living, knows no moral code that allows of a final judgment as to the ethical virtue or viciousness of any particular political action. War is a last, but also a legitimate, resort for the realisation of national aims. I cannot say whether this view will allow of the bellicosity of Russia being acquitted as "moral" in view of the atrocities of this world war. But whoever recognises a movement for expansion as a moral motive for war must admit that a means to self-preservation must take ethical precedence of it, and if the statesman cannot base his calculations on the moral considerations entertained by his opponent, yet he cannot leave out of count altogether such considerations without which the life of communities is as inconceivable as that of individuals. And the following points cannot be overlooked in a review of the situation in July, 1914.

Although we had at the time no knowledge of the

Tsar's approval of the Sassonow proposals of February, 1914, yet we could not for a moment be in doubt as to the general tension of the European situation. Only the most immoderate and malicious criticism could accuse me of having stumbled blindfold to destruction. But all efforts for peace were bound to fail against the strong will to war of Russia—a will that England could not soften. But was the road to peace blocked by political necessity had not Russia intentionally barred it? The answer is that Russia had been deprived of every objective reason for war with the assurance given it as to the integrity of Serbia, and with the resumption of direct conversations, temporarily interrupted, between St. Petersburg and Vienna. Both, as I have said, were due to our urgent counsels. If St. Petersburg had negotiated direct with Vienna on this basis, then it is hard to see why an understanding could not have been reached with the help of the English at St. Petersburg and of ourselves at Vienna, which might have been accepted by Russia without an insupportable loss of prestige. Sir E. Grey, too, considered that mediation was possible, even after an Austrian invasion of Serbia, provided Austria in so doing declared it would retain the occupied territory only until it had received satisfaction from Serbia, and also gave assurances that it would not advance further.* But if the view is held that Russia could brook no thwarting

* Blue Book, No. 88.